

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 3, 2001

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Daniels:

We are writing to request that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) immediately convene an interagency working group to identify any and all authorities that together can provide an economic assistance package to address the drought situation in the Klamath Basin in Oregon.

The Klamath Basin is in both Oregon and California, and has Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed suckers, salmon, and bald eagles. There are also several Tribes with treaty rights that must be respected. The Klamath Project, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, delivers water to about 200,000 acres. There are approximately 15,000 acres of land leased to farmers on the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges. PacifiCorp owns several dams on the Klamath River downstream of the federal project, which are operated under a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license.

The Basin is experiencing a severe drought, on top of which the Klamath Project is being asked to provide additional water for species listed under the Endangered Species Act. By the end of this week, the Bureau of Reclamation will be making a water supply allocation to irrigators who receive water from the project. We are very concerned that this allocation will still result in severe economic hardship for the local economy, which has already been hit hard by the reduction in federal timber harvests over the last decade.


We would like to make certain that local officials, residents and businesses know the federal resources that are available to them in this difficult time. We are hopeful that drought assistance, emergency loans from the Small Business Administration, Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) funds, and the like will be available to our constituents.

Our staff (Valerie West for Senator Smith, Sarah Bittleman for Senator Wyden and Troy Tidwell for Congressman Walden) stand ready to participate in these interagency meetings. We realize that this is a very busy time for OMB staff, but our constituents are facing an uncertain future through no fault of their own. We appreciate your attention to our urgent request.

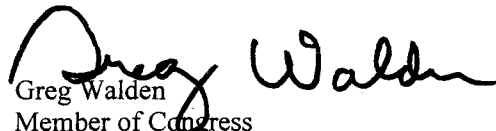
Sincerely,



Gordon H. Smith
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Greg Walden
Member of Congress